Did you know…?

The Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) is one of the most commonly injured ligaments in the knee with 70% of ACL injuries being noncontact – sudden change in direction with a planted foot or rapidly stopping. Female athletes are two to eight times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than male athletes. Athletes who suffer an ACL injury are at an increased risk of tearing or injuring the other ACL, so prevention is crucial!

AGILITY. PLYOMETRICS. STRENGTH.

Several prevention programs have been developed in an attempt to decrease the risk of non-contact ACL injuries. These programs may differ in specific exercises and drills, but they share a common focus – improving overall agility, balance, power, speed, and strength. Orthopedic + Fracture Specialists has established the Knee Training Zone program that is customized for the specific needs of individual sports. With any sport activity or exercise, the most important thing is to make sure you perform a thorough warm-up and stretching routine. Once your body is prepped you can proceed with the program. Visit: http://www.oandfs.com/patient-services/knee-training-zone/other for the Knee Training Zone program. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Agility**
  Agility skill exercises are designed to improve coordination, speed, and balance. Such drills can be used to improve speed and refining sports techniques. These include, but are not limited to: shuttle runs, high-knee drills, side-to-side drills, forward-backward sprints, one-legged balance drills, etc.

- **Plyometrics**
  Plyometric exercises help to build power, strength, and speed. These exercises are often basic, but it’s critical to perform them correctly and ensure a soft landing, accepting your weight on the balls of your feet and slowly rolling back to the heel with bent knees and straight hips. Exercises in this phase include: lateral cone jumps, forward/backward cone jumps, squat jumps, etc.

- **Strength**
  Exercises in this phase will lead to increased core and leg strength and ultimately, more stability. Technique is key, so pay close attention to proper execution to avoid injury and perform these exercises after plyometric training has been completed. Some exercises include walking lunges, hamstring curls, toe raises, side planks, front planks, etc.

**PRO TIP:** Remember to never let your knees turn inwards when landing – HIPS over KNEES over ANKLES! PERFORM YOUR EXERCISES WITH PERFECT TECHNIQUE!

These tips provide general information only and are not a substitute for your own judgment or physician consultation.